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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/664,633	09/18/2003	Raymond Hauser	36400.68US1	5074

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EXAMINER

LUM VANNUCCI, LEE SIN YEE

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3611

DATE MAILED: 09/09/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/664,633

Applicant(s)

HAUSER ET AL.

Examiner

Lee Lum

Art Unit

3611

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 18 September 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-10 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 5, 7 and 8 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 2-4, 6, 9 and 10 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 18 September 2003 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

1. The disclosure is objected to because following elements lack antecedent basis:
in Claim 1, lines 13 and 16 – pressure rise rate,
in Claim 5, lines 6-7 – high/low pressure.

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Ishii 5957229.

Ishii discloses a zero turn vehicle comprising

First L, and second R, drive systems,

Each system comprising pumps PL,11L/ PR,11R, and motor ML/MR within separate hydraulic loop (c7, fourth complete paragraph) with high and low pressure sides (inherent),

the loop including first and second valves 31/32 to reduce pressure when the respective pump is engaged, or, from a high-pressure side to a low-pressure side (c8, first and third complete paragraphs),

Each motor driving an axle 7 and wheel (inherent).

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

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Claims 5 and 8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ishii in view of Hayashi et al 6209675.

Ishii does not disclose a second valve in each loop that returns fluid exceeding a pressure threshold from one side to the other side of the loop. Hayashi shows this valve 50 in c9, first complete paragraph. It would have been obvious to one with ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include this element, as shown in Hayashi, to protect the fluid circuit from overheating, thus increasing performance of the circuit and vehicle. This valve is very well-known in the art.

4. **Claims 2-4, 6, 9 and 10** are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Prior art does not disclose a hydraulic drive system as described above including, *inter alia*, a separate casing for each pump, each motor, and each valve block, the block separate from the respective pump.


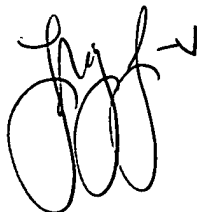
5. The prior art made of record, and not relied upon, is considered pertinent to the disclosure: Lindholdt 6749037, Nakatani et al 6722464, Ishimaru et al 6457546, Yano et al 6401854, 6196348, Irikura et al 6397966, Kouno et al 5850886.

6. Communication with USPTO/Examiner

Any inquiry concerning this communication, or others, should be directed to Ms. Lum at 703 305-0232, M-F, 9-6. If attempts to reach the examiner are unsuccessful, her supervisor, Ms. Lesley Morris is at 703 308-0629.

Our fax number is 703 872-9306. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for unpublished applications: private PAIR only, for published applications: private or public PAIR. For more information re PAIR: <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Questions re private PAIR: contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866 217-9197.

Ms. Lee S. Lum, Examiner
9/3/04



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